1: Metraux E-5 (1934-1935) 1940
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try to prostitute themselves to foreign visitors, and their playmates act as go-betweens.

Roussel (190, p. 429) speaks with disparagement of the "shameful laziness" of Easter Island girls until they were married. Probably here, as in Mangareva, young people of both sexes lived an easy life until they had to support a family. In the seclusion houses they probably spent their days lying on the ground, composing songs, telling stories, discussing their dreams. Some young men engaged themselves as workmen for a salary consisting of one or two rats and a few sweet potatoes. Others helped the adults to till and plant, but they did not accompany them on fishing parties—probably because they were afraid of spoiling their complexions through exposure to the sun (190, p. 10).

ADOPTION

Adoption of children has always been widely practiced on Easter Island. Nothing expresses more strikingly the strength of the old custom than the fact that my informant, Victoria Rapahango, who lived many years with an Englishman and bore him several children, gave one of them to an old Italian with whom she was on friendly terms. It is not known to which relatives or friends the children were given formerly; now they are generally entrusted to the godparents. If the child's new parents can feed him, he is given to them a few days after birth; otherwise, he is given after weaning. The adoptive parents treat the child as if he were their own. Roussel (190, p. 466) observes that " . . . the adopted children were put on the same rank as the legitimate. They were entitled to the same care and the same attentions." This attitude continues today.

The child takes the name of his adoptive parents and inherits from them. Much difficulty has arisen in tracing genealogies because adoptive parents will not permit a distinction to be made between their own and adoptive children. "I have raised him and consequently he is my son" is a statement frequently heard on Easter Island. The blood parents take no interest in the children they have given away; they see them rarely and lavish no particular tenderness upon them.

Sexual Licence

The accounts of early travelers indicate that the first reaction of the natives on the arrival of a ship was to barter food and women. By the first half of the nineteenth century Easter Islanders seem to have built up a regular trade with their women (p. 36). However, the small number of women seen by the navigators makes it evident, as Cook suggests, that most of the feminine population had been hidden somewhere (p. 20). Probably fear was one of the main causes for these precautions, but we may assume that the same sexual freedom was not permitted to all women. Those who were allowed and even

10: Cooke D-5 (1886) 1899
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being the case, it may readily be conceived that when the mission was removed from the island and the father was compelled to bid farewell to his simple-minded, but loving and faithful, Rapa Nui friend the parting must have been a sad and painful one. In the ten years which have elapsed since that time Chief Mati has never forgotten his well-beloved son, the priest, and whenever, which is only at very long intervals, a white man arrives at the island Mati's first thought is to inquire the tidings of his far-away friend. On the first occasion when my associate, Dr. Whitaker, in company with Mr. Salmon, who had previously advised the doctor on the subject, called on Mati, the latter, now over fourscore and ten, confident that the doctor came from the priest's country and must necessarily know him, immediately began to inquire regarding him; if he was well and happy; if he still loved and remembered him. When the doctor, in order to humor and gratify the old man, wove a harmless and ingenious, but fictitious, narrative about the priest, in which he highly commended Mati, the latter groaned dismally, contorted his face, and wept like a child. Seeing this, his poor old wife approached her husband, laid her arm on his shoulder, looked up in his face a moment, and then, after a series of mournful grimaces, bowed her head on her arm and, in the abandon of grief, groaned and cried aloud. Then everyone among the Rapa Nuiis present, taking the cue from the old lady, lifted up their voices in chorus and for a time it fairly rained salt tears. The groans were dismal and the cries pitiful, so that the most callous might easily have been moved to compassion.

On another occasion the doctor was asked to see a little girl who was suffering with a cervical abscess. The usual crowd of men, women, and children was present. Had the doctor informed them in advance of what he intended doing they never would have consented to the proceeding. Quietly seating himself, he gently and unconcernedly drew the child toward him and, placing her head between his knees, drew from his pocket an abscess knife. That started the concert. The minute they saw it, and divined that he was going to cut the child, groans and lamentations and expressions of sympathy for the little one could be heard on all sides. Quickly incising the abscess the pus spurted and ran in a stream, whereupon the audience howled with renewed energy, curiosity having produced a temporary lull, and for a time the situation was interesting and entertaining to a degree. The child, who had scarcely felt the blade, and scared by the din about her, must needs pipe her little tune and join with the others. As soon as they saw that the child had not been harmed and understood the object of the apparent cruelty their demonstrations were just as pronounced in the other direction and they manifested their delight and gratification in expressions of joy, and peals of hysterical laughter, and were prepared to mount the doctor on a platform, so to speak, then and there.

As with all the natives throughout the South Sea islands, the Rapa Nui is undeniably, and very decidedly, averse to hard work. He delights

10: Cooke D-5 (1886) 1899
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461 to lie around and gossip, to smoke, to sit and "moon" over the industry, the greatness, and the monuments of his ancestors, the degeneracy and decadence of his race, perhaps, and his own utter and ineradicable worthlessness individually. Natural covetousness and desire for the possession of lucre may tempt him to serve the white man for a time, but he soon tires of his work, which speedily becomes irksome to him. And while he may exert himself a trifle occasionally, in the way of fishing, or in the cultivation of an 8 by 10 patch of sugar cane, taro, and sweet potato, it is only as a matter of necessity, to keep body and soul together, and he infinitely prefers idleness and the enjoyment of his *dolce far niente*.

273 Intoxicating drinks of any description, even kava, so common in the islands to the westward, are unknown to these people, and neither do Mr. Salmon, or the other foreign residents, keep any liquors in their possession. While, therefore, it is true that here, as elsewhere among uncivilized peoples, contact with the European has been attended by their gradual extinction, it can not be said that all the usual factors obtain in this instance, since neither the venereal poison nor intoxicants exist on the island. Consequently, these can not be assigned as causes of the decadence of the Rapa Nuiis. Deportation, forced and voluntary, 161 smallpox, and customs, elsewhere mentioned in this paper, will explain their gradual extinction, in part, at least, while the fact remains that their seemingly inevitable destiny was vastly accelerated when the white man set foot upon their mysterious, mid-ocean island.

304 The rite of circumcision, so common in the other islands, is unknown here, nor does their language possess an equivalent word.

162 As may be inferred from the preponderance of the male over the female portion of the community the latter are in demand, and the sup-562 ply not being equal to it, the women are a source of great solicitude; much 595 consideration is shown them; they are fairly well taken care of, and 589 are treated, generally, with kindness, not to say affection. Polygamy, under the circumstances, does not, of course, exist and celibacy, it may be said, only from necessity, since there are not enough females.

595 While it can not be truthfully claimed that polyandry, in the strict acceptation of the term, obtains among them, they have a custom which very nearly approaches that practice, as will appear presently.

584 At the present day the ceremonies of the church, measurably at least, govern their marriages; nevertheless the ancient custom still prevails, to a considerable extent, and in a few words it is this: When a boy arrives at the age of, say 12 years, his father looks about him for a suitable life-companion, of the opposite sex, for the young hopeful. Having discovered one to his liking the father proceeds to interview the parents of the damsel, who is perhaps of the same age, or more 584 likely younger than her prospective lord, declares his intentions matri-583 monial and negotiations are then entered into. After a due amount of haggling as to the value of the girl, during which the parents of the